



Eastern Australia Trip Report (Oct 10 - 17, 2022)

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Day 1: October 10, 2022 Our guests had a meet and greet over dinner at a fabulous Balinese restaurant. All guests were keen to commence the birding first thing in the morning. **Day 2: October 11, 2022**



Group at Esplanade © Abram Tompkins

After a proper rest, we started birding the Cairns Esplanade at sunrise. The tide allowed great views of Bar-tailed Godwits, a stunning Terek Sandpiper, a handful of Far Eastern Curlews and fantastic views of an Asian Dowitcher, in addition to Red-necked stint, Red-capped plover, Great knot, Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone, Pied Oystercatcher, Silver Gull, Caspian Tern, Australian Pelican, Great, Intermediate and Little Egret, Pacific Reef-Heron and Grey-tailed Tattler. The mangrove produced our first views of Torresian Kingfisher while the other tropical trees lining the area showed off Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove, Torresian Imperial-Pigeon, fleeting views of Double-eyed Fig-Parrots, Australasian Figbirds and Rainbow Lorikeets. Other birds included Laughing Kookaburra, Brown Honeyeater, Varied Honeyeater, Green Oriole, Willie-wagtail, Mistletoebird, Scaly-breasted Munia, Australian Swiftlet, Peaceful and Spotted Doves, Rock Pigeon, Common Mynah, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Welcome Swallow and a beautifully perched singing Little Bronze-Cuckoo to end our pre-breakfast birding excursion. After departing the esplanade we ventured to the Botanic Gardens to scope out a Papuan Frogmouth roosting spot and were treated with mostly unobstructed views! We then headed south towards Etty Bay (with lunch in tow) to search for Southern Cassowary. We encountered Cattle Egrets, Metallic Starlings, Rainbow Bee-eaters, Whistling Kites and a Black-necked stork en route, plus some Agile Wallabies. After a bit of searching (and after spotting Yellow-spotted Honeyeaters), a female Cassowary showed up and put on quite a show wandering down the road while foraging on Blue Quandong fruits and continuing onto the beach where she tried to sneak up on some unsuspecting sunbathers!



Cassowary scouring for food © Abram Tompkins

We returned to Cairns to walk around the Centenary Lakes and added Osprey, Striated Heron, Little Black Cormorant, Magpie-lark, Australian Brushturkey, Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Pacific Black Duck, Bush Stone-curlew and Black Butcherbird.



Bush Stone-Curlew on nest © Abram Tompkins

Time allowed for one more stop: a known Rufous Owl location. Darkness was settling in quickly, but all guests had views before we retreated for dinner. **Day 3: October 12, 2022** It was a rainy start on our 2-hour journey to Michaelmas Cay on the Great Barrier Reef for nesting seabirds, but upon arrival the weather was absolutely perfect and the birding spectacle was top-notch! We had unbeatable views of Brown Noddies, Sooty Terns, Great and Lesser Crested Terns, Brown Boobies and a Red-footed Booby, in addition to fly-by views of Great Frigatebirds. Brief views of Black-naped Terns and a lone Roseate Tern as well rounded out our day on the reef.



Michaelmas Cay © Abram Tompkins

Day 4: October 13, 2022 We started another morning at the Cairns Esplanade and added Olive-backed Sunbird, White-bellied Cuckooshrike, Yellow Honeyeater, Common Greenshank, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Bar-shouldered Dove before venturing to a cemetery nearby. A fly-by Pacific Baza was on display, followed by a pair of nesting Gray Goshawks and Brahminy Kites, plus a roost of flying foxes (both Spectacled and Black Flying Foxes were present). We hit the road, left Cairns and picked up where we left off in the Atherton Tablelands (Cairns Highlands). A brief stop at an information centre further added to our trip total with Olive-backed Oriole, Rufous Whistlers, White-throated Honeyeater and Black Kites. A nearby stop for a mob of Eastern Grey Kangaroos (and very excited tour guests) had Channel-billed Cuckoos and Pacific Koel calling, followed by sightings of Little Corella, Red-winged Parrot, Crested Pigeon and Pale-headed Rosellas. A targeted search in Mount Malloy found us a Squatter Pigeon along with several Great Bowerbirds (and bowers too)! Upon arrival at Kingfisher Park Birdwatchers Lodge, we quickly added Chestnut-breasted Munia, Red-browed Firetail, Macleay's Honeyeater, Blue-faced honeyeater, Cryptic Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Honeyeater and Spectacled Monarch at the feeders and surrounding areas.



Great Bowerbird bower © Abram Tompkins

Day 5: October 14, 2022 We started with an early morning drive north to the Daintree River for a 6am river cruise. Upon arrival we were greeted by a Wompoo Fruit-Dove down low offering spectacular views of its splendid colours. Once on the boat we saw several Azure Kingfishers, male and female Shining Flycatchers, a nesting Papuan Frogmouth, Magpie Geese, Radjah Shelduck, Australasian Darter, Little Pied Cormorant, great views of Black Butcherbirds, nesting Brown-backed Honeyeaters and Large-billed Gerygones, plus a few resident Salt-water Crocodiles. After lunch, we made several stops en route back to the Kingfisher Lodge, including at Mount Lewis. We added spectacular views of Topknot Pigeons, along with Scarlet Myzomela, Dusky Myzomela, Forest Kingfisher, Rufous Shrikethrush, Gray Fantail, Spangled Drongo, White-eared Monarch, Pale-yellow Robin, Silvereye, Bridled Honeyeater, Helmeted Friarbird, Atherton Scrubwren and some very brief clear views of a Fernwren! An obliging Yellow-breasted Boatbill was spotted back at the lodge, in addition to the regular feeder birds. Red-legged Pademelon were present in the evening, plus sightings of Cane Toad, White-lipped Tree Frog and a Dunnart. **Day 6: October 15, 2022** We birded a few local spots in Julatten in the morning and picked up Blue-winged Kookaburra, Pheasant

Coucal, Black-faced Monarch, Striated Pardalote, Common Cicadabird, Lemon-bellied Flycatcher, White-cheeked Honeyeater and Large-billed Scrubwren. As we shifted towards Mt Carbine we added several Australian Bustards meandering in the fields, plus Torresian Crow, Apostlebird, Pied Butcherbird, Galah, Straw-necked Ibis, Tawny Frogmouth, numerous Australian Magpies and Black Swan. After a lunch stop in Mareeba we continued onward to Chambers Wildlife Rainforest Lodge where we saw Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos en route, plus heard Spotted Catbird and Victoria's Riflebird upon arrival. A pre-dinner excursion into Yungaburra found Platypus, Lumholtz Tree Kangaroo and some flyover cranes. Post-dinner, back at the lodge, we had views of Sugar Gliders and Northern Brown Bandicoots at the feeding tree platform. **Day 7: October 16, 2022** Sunrise birding around the lodge grounds allowed us to get clear views of Spotted Catbirds and displaying Victoria's Riflebirds, plus excellent views of a male Superb Fruit-Dove. Other species around the grounds included Rufous Fantail, Bower's Shrike-thrush, Golden Whistler, Eastern Whipbird (antiphonal calls make this species a treat to hear), Brown Gerygone, Lewin's Honeyeater and Shining Bronze-Cuckoo. A quick stop at Lake Eacham added some distant Great Crested Grebes so we moved onto Lake Barrine, where we went for a short walk and came across a few Tooth-billed Bowerbirds and saw one "stage-type bower", which is used to attract mates for this polygamous species.



Tooth-billed Bowerbird stage © Abram Tompkins

A rest stop at Hasties Swamp always produces several species and today was no different. While eating lunch, we had great looks at Grey Teal, Dusky Moorhen, Australasian Swamphen, Eurasian Coot, Pied Stilt, Comb-crested Jacana, Little Black Cormorant, White-faced Heron, Hardhead, Australasian Grebe and Royal Spoonbill. An eventful search at Mt Hypipamee Crater had a calling White-throated Treecreeper, a Peregrine Falcon perched above the crater, Grey-headed Robins and best of all, a male calling Golden Bowerbird which perched calmly nearby for great viewing. Barn Owls were spotted near the Curtain Fig parking area and Coppery Brushtail Possum were spotted at the entry just after dark, then we retreated to the lodge for a well-deserved rest. **Day 8: October 17, 2022** We started around the lodge this morning and had great views of Victoria's Riflebirds and Spotted Catbirds yet again, plus other usual sightings. After breakfast we made a few stops to admire Sarus Cranes and Brolgas at close range, followed up by fabulous views of a Red-backed

Fairy-wren pair near a fence line, Brown Cuckoo Doves and Eastern Yellow Robins. We returned to Cairns for the evening and prepared for our early morning flight to Brisbane. **Day 9: October 18, 2022** We boarded our 6am flight for Brisbane and after arrival we drove to a southern suburb in search of the iconic Koala, which was successful. We saw several Maned Ducks, Noisy Miners, Mangrove Honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird, Pied Oystercatcher, Masked Lapwings, Australian Ibis, Grey Butcherbird and heard a Mangrove Gerygone. Closer to Lamington National Park we made one additional stop and came across Bell Miners, Variegated Fairywrens and spotted a female Paradise Riflebird and a handful of White-breasted Woodswallows. We continued onward to O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat with short stops along the way to get better looks at Red-necked Wallabies. Once up the mountain and outside O'Reilly's reception, we were greeted by an assortment of extremely tame species seeking food, which included Regent and Satin Bowerbirds, Australian King Parrots, Crimson Rosellas, Wonga Pigeons, Grey Shrikethrush and White-browed Scrubwrens. Spotlighting after dinner had several close views of Common Ringtail Possums.



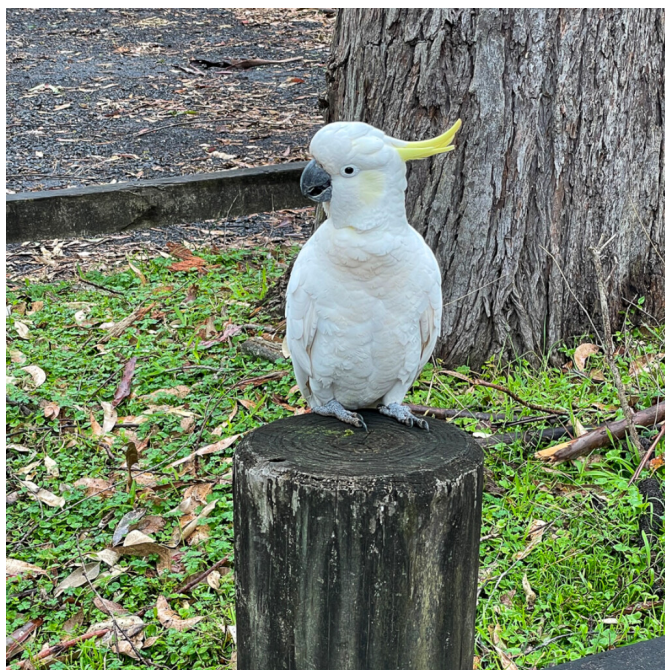
Regent Bowerbird male © Abram Tompkins

Day 10: October 19, 2022 Our target species for this location were Albert's Lyrebird and Noisy Pitta and neither of them disappointed! Two Albert's Lyrebird males were encountered during the misty morning walk and one Noisy Pitta perched allowing elongated views while it studied its surroundings. Other species throughout the day on various walks around the area were Superb Fairywrens, Yellow-throated Scrubwren, White-browed Scrubwren, Brown Thornbill, Varied Triller, Australian Logrunner (demonstrating their technique to move the leaf litter), Eastern Whipbird and Pied Currawong. **Day 11: October 20, 2022** The magic of O'Reilly's was still on display this morning, even in the rainy conditions. We descended the mountain and found a Tawny Grassbird before continuing onward to the Brisbane Airport for our flight south to Sydney.



Australian King Parrot © Abram Tompkins

Day 12: October 21, 2022 Our pelagic trip out was cancelled due to strong wind warnings and 2-3m waves so we had a change of plans and birded in the Sydney suburbs and found an assortment of new trip species, which included Sacred Kingfisher, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Australian Raven, New Holland Honeyeater, Little Wattlebird, Red Wattlebird, Dollarbird, Spotted Pardalote and Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, in addition to more spectacular views of Topknot Pigeons, which has been seen in such great positions on several occasions.



Sulphur Crested Cockatoo © Abram Tompkins

Day 13: October 22, 2022 We stopped in Kiama and scanned the coastline where we saw several shearwaters, but they were too far off the coast to identify (even with a scope). However, one Australian Gannet was spotted in the same area. At Barren Grounds an echidna crossed the access track to our delight and then we followed that up with some prolonged views of Southern Emuwrens. We also heard the very secretive Eastern Bristlebird. A Pacific Heron, a few Nankeen Kestrels, some European Starlings and a Black-shouldered Kite were sighted post-lunch en route to our Blue Mountains accommodation. **Day 14: October 23, 2022** At various stops in the Blue Mountains we added the following species: Buff-rumped Thornbill, Red-browed Treecreeper, Black-faced Cuckooshrike, spectacular views of Rockwarbler, Eastern Spinebill, Superb Lyrebird and European Goldfinch. We continued onward from Blackheath to Wallerawang and stopped at Lake Wallace. Eastern Rosellas were plentiful, an Australian Reed Warbler appeared briefly, but Gang-gang Cockatoos stole the show as they flew past. Wonderful views of a male Musk Duck followed, plus some Blue-billed Ducks. **Day 15: October 24, 2022** A day in the recently flooded Capertee valley added a chunk of new species, which included White-eared Honeyeaters, Jacky-winters, Dusky Woodswallow, Eastern Shrike-tit, White-plumed Honeyeaters, Brown Treecreepers, Red-rumped Parrots, White-winged Choughs, Restless Flycatchers, Tree Martin, Fairy Martin, Red-kneed Dotterel, Australasian Pipit, Speckled Warbler, Weebill (smallest bird in Australia), Yellow-rumped Thornbill, White-browed Babbler, Little Lorikeet, Musk Lorikeet and the stunning Turquoise Parrot. Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Fuscous Honeyeater, Black-chinned Honeyeater, Brown Falcon and Little Eagle. A Lace Monitor observed our group from the comfort of a gum tree while a Common Wombat was seen meandering the roadway today. **Day 16: October 25, 2022** Our last full day on tour had us return to the Capertee valley for the morning. Brown Quail were seen on the roadway, Pacific Koel were loudly vocalizing and Noisy Friarbirds provided their best views of the tour. An Australian Bushlark was heard, but couldn't be tracked down. We proceeded back to Sydney for dinner and reflected over what was an amazing few weeks filled with excellent birds and wildlife.



Eagle-Eye Tours guests at Capertee Valley

Day 17: October 26, 2022 The fantastic tour concluded this morning in Sydney with some of the group heading onwards for the Tasmania extension and others heading to their respective homes.